

Tale *Feathers*

April
2006

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Watching Warblers

Tuesday, April 18th

The wood warblers, that fantastic group of migrant songbirds, delight us every year with their return northward for breeding, and yet also frustrate us with strained necks and all-too-quick glimpses on tree limbs in shadow or half-blocked from view. Michael Male and Judy Fieth in *Watching Warblers* have taken the frustration out of warbler watching and left only the pure joy brought by wonderful, up-close views of 39 species singing, feeding, nest-building and tending their young. Whether you have been watching for decades or just recently noticed the bird life in your back yard, you are sure to be amazed by this production.

Join us at 7:30 p.m. at the Powder Valley Nature Center to enjoy this wonderful film. Running time is 58 minutes long and will be preceded by a few Society announcements. Please bring a friend as the show is free to all. If you are new to bird watching, bring your questions, too; there are sure to be many of our local "experts" in attendance to help you out.

From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go ¼ mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. Community Center is in the northwest corner of the lower level (closest to Olive and Ballas).

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112



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St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement
of
The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals
To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

St. Louis Audubon Society to host Audubon Society of Missouri Spring Meeting May 5-7, 2006

Mark your calendars! The Audubon Society of Missouri (ASM) will have its Spring Meeting in St. Louis May 5- 7, 2006. All are invited. Hosted by the St. Louis Audubon Society, weekend festivities will include a Friday evening and warbler ID workshop presented by **Bill Rowe**, Saturday half-day and full-day field trips, Saturday evening silent auction and banquet at Favazza's Restaurant on the Italian Hill with featured speaker **Tim Barksdale** of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Search Team discussing the rediscovery of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker and ongoing search efforts in Arkansas' Big Woods, Sunday half-day field trips and an optional Sunday wrap-up luncheon. Based out of the Holiday Inn at Hwy 44 and Hampton in St. Louis (just five minutes from either of optimal warbler migratory stopover sites Tower Grove Park and Forest Park's Kennedy Woods), the weekend is sure to offer wonderful birding opportunities and great camaraderie.

Detailed registration info will be in the March issue of ASM's quarterly publication *The Bluebird* and is available on the ASM web site www.mobirds.org under "Meetings". Questions can be directed to ASM President Sue Gustafson at 314-968-8128.

Blackburnian Warbler seen in February

John Solodar

On February 25, 2006 a group of seven people, including three St. Louisans, were treated to the sight of a well-plumaged Blackburnian Warbler at close range at a height of only 12 ft or so. This sighting, in the Andes Mountains at about 9,000 feet just outside of Quito, Ecuador, reminded me of the theme of Brad Jacobs' talk at our evening meeting in February.

Brad is working to set up programs throughout the United States wherein residents of each state would donate funds to protect the South and Central American wintering grounds of the spring migrants that we enjoy so much in North America. The Blackburnian Warbler is one of our migrants whose wintering grounds deserve such protection. Ecuador seems like a long way from St. Louis, but the area that this Blackburnian Warbler was using deserves our help as much as any refuge in the St. Louis area. Much of the land in this part of Ecuador has already been lost to clearing and cattle raising.

When Brad's program is up and running in Missouri we hope that all of you will contribute to help save the wintering grounds of our summer birds. Most of our migrants settle in Central America for the winter but a few, such as our Blackburnian, go much farther south.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Torrey Berger

The Mississippi, Audubon and St. Louis

Long before Hurricane Katrina brought the deplorable state of the Mississippi River to national attention, the National Audubon Society had adopted a priority program working for the protection and restoration of the River's ecosystem, while also supporting the continued economic vitality of the River communities and the river navigation system. A primary goal of this program is to get people out on the River and help them make the connection between the health of their community and the health of the River. Among Audubon's accomplishments to date in this regard are: (i) mapping over 500 sights as part of the amazing Great River Birding Trail (www.audubon.org/campaign/umr/birdmaps.html); (ii) identifying nearly 150 places along the River as Important Bird Areas for evaluation for long term protection; and (iii) operating the Audubon "Ark" which has put scores of people in intimate contact with the River.

Recognizing the strategic location of St. Louis at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, National Audubon Society has determined that the flagship project for its Mississippi River program should be a St. Louis Audubon Center and Audubon Ark which will be located near the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. Building on a 100 year tradition of connecting people to nature, the St. Louis Audubon Center will be a place to learn first hand about the Mississippi River and engage in stewardship of this great natural resource for future generations.

This project envisions a nature center at River's edge and an 80 passenger riverboat with excursions dedicated to the study of our big River's ecology. Voyages to the confluence of the Rivers will be made available to the general public and tourists, as well as for area schools and summer camps. Arrangements will be made for accessible docking platforms at Jones Confluence Point Park and Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area.

Some of the major funding requirements for this project have already been secured, with substantial commitments from Great Rivers Greenway, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the McKnight Foundation. The scope of this project will be comparable to such established institutions as the Science Center and the Planetarium.

We at St. Louis Audubon Society are very excited about the prospects of having a major National Audubon Center here in our own backyard and are already anticipating the opportunities it will provide for broadening and enhancing our educational outreach potential. We will keep you advised as to future developments.

Torrey Berger



Birding Trips for April and May

John Solodar

April 15, Saturday - Castlewood State Park -

Mikes Brady and Grant will head up this traditional first trip of the big migratory push. Expect to see lots of early arrival warblers, vireos, some woodpeckers, thrushes, tanagers and hawks. Meet at 8:00 AM.

April 22, Saturday - Highway 79 Corridor -

B.K.Leach Conservation Area will be a major focus of this trip, but we will also hit a few other areas as well. Trip leader Torrey Berger will choose from Prairie Slough, Clarence Cannon NWR, the sod farms and the Winfield Dam area. This can easily turn into an all day trip so bring lunch, water and FRS radios for communicating on the driving portions. Meet Torrey at 8:00 AM at the first parking lot for the Bittern Basin unit of B.K.Leach.

April 23, Sunday - SPECIAL ADDED TRIP,

JOINT WITH WGNSS - Boone's Crossing unit of Big Muddy Refuge. This is a newly opened area in the flood plain of the Missouri River. Lots of trees, water, some brushy areas and some fields as well. This visit will require about 2-3 miles of easy level walking. We'll meet at 8:00 AM at the parking lot of the Chesterfield Recreation Center. John Solodar will lead this trip and his experience in the area indicates that the birding should be good.

April 29, Saturday- Columbia Bottom - We've scheduled this trip three weeks earlier than last year in order to see what should be a greater variety of warblers. The area offers some dense woods for warblers, etc., plenty of grassy areas for sparrows and lots of water for birds that prefer aquatic settings. Mike Arduser and John Solodar will lead this trip starting at 7:30 AM.

May 5-7, Friday - Sunday - Field Trips scheduled throughout the St. Louis area in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Audubon Society of Missouri. These will include Tower Grove Park, Forest Park, Busch Conservation Area, Little Creve Coeur, Riverlands, Columbia Bottom, etc. See www.mobirds.org for details or watch for announcements on the MOBirds listserve.

May 13, Saturday - Shaw Nature Reserve - This trip will start at 7:30 AM as we are almost at the peak of warbler migration and want to utilize as much of the morning daylight as possible. It will be led by Connie Alwood and at least one other person.

This is an all day trip starting at Shaw Nature Reserve and going on to Robertsville State Park. Shaw is a great place for birding with a variety of habitats and many different species. Robertsville is attractive for Henslow's sparrows in some areas.

How to get there

Boone's Crossing Unit - To get there from mid-St.Louis County, take Hwy 40 (I-64) to the Boone's Crossing exit in Chesterfield Valley. Take a right at the light at the top

of the ramp and you will quickly come to a T at the north outer road. Go

left, west, 2.3 miles to the Chesterfield Recreation Center and park in the lot. The actual parking lot for the Boone's Crossing unit of the Big Muddy Refuge only has space for 6 cars and we will carpool to that lot from the Chesterfield Recreation Area.

Busch Conservation Area - Take U.S.40/I-64 west into St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south from U.S 40 about 1 mile to Hwy D. Turn right and go about 1.5 miles to the entrance on the right. Turn left at the "T" to Hampton Lake and meet in the parking lot. For trips using a HQ starting point turn right at the "T".

Castlewood State Park - Take Big Bend west from I-270 for about 6 miles. Turn left on Ries Road. Follow Ries to its termination, then turn left into the Park. Park in lot on right just before the first small stream.

Columbia Bottom - Take Riverview Blvd north from the northern leg of I-270 (the last exit in Missouri before I-270 crosses into Illinois) and go 2.8 miles to Columbia Bottom entrance on the right. Go 1.7 miles and meet at the River Access Parking lot on the left.

Highway 79 Corridor - Starting point is the first, or southern, parking lot for Bittern Basin, a new unit of B.K.Leach. From I-70 take Hwy 79 north through Elsberry. Just north of Elsberry turn right on County Rd P with a sign for Prairie Slough. The road bends to the left after about 1/2 mile and the gravel parking lot on the left is just after the bend.

Shaw Nature Reserve - I-44 west from I-270 to Gray Summit (Hwy 100). Cross over I-44 on Hwy 100. Follow Hwy 100 one block to entrance. (Entrance fee \$3.00 per person.)

St. Louis Audubon Society to Participate in Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival April 28-29, 2006

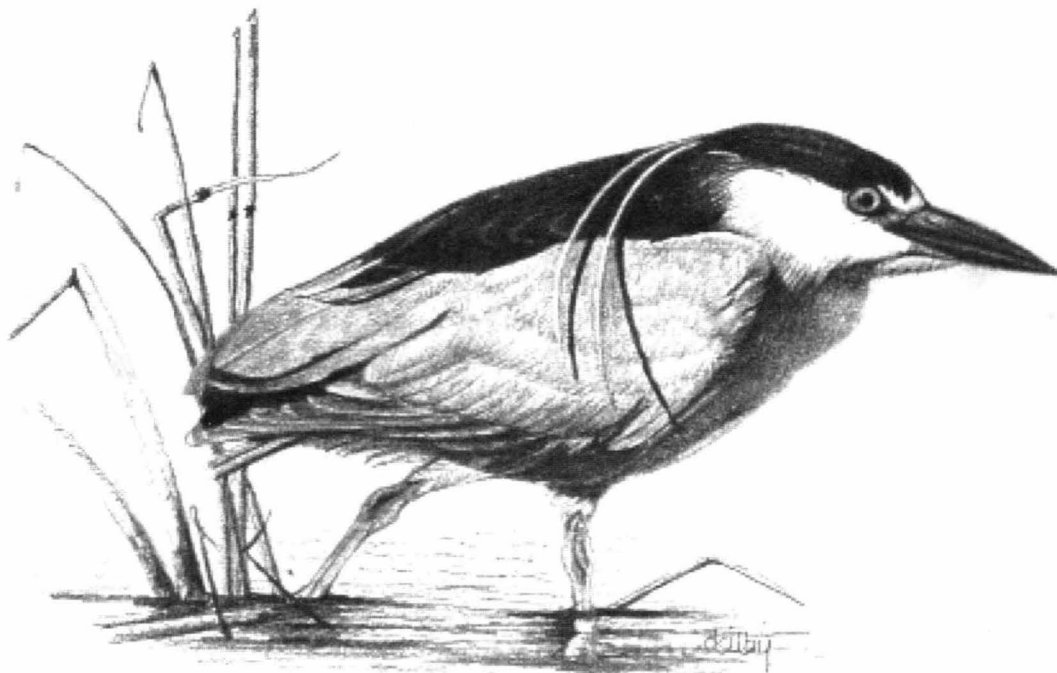
The first annual Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival will be held on Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29, 2006. A partnership of organizations within the Confluence Greenway is planning the Festival to spotlight birding opportunities where the great rivers meet. The Festival is reserved for school groups on Friday, April 28. The public is invited to attend the Festival on Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival will be based at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary near Alton, Illinois. "The Festival will offer programs and events for all levels of birding interest including educational programs, speakers, vendors, on-site tours of migratory shore birds and guided birding tours at other Confluence sites," according to Ken Buchholz, program chair. Buchholz, representing Audubon Missouri, said "The Festival will celebrate the Confluence, part of the Mississippi Flyway, as an important area for birds and a destination for bird watching."

"The Sanctuary has recently been designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society," said Pat McGinnis, Project Manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "The site was also voted the No. 1 birding site in the area by the Riverfront Times."

Local organizations planning the Festival include: Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, Audubon Missouri, Confluence Greenway Partnership, Missouri Botanical Garden, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri and Illinois Departments of Natural Resources, National Great Rivers Research & Education Center, St. Louis Audubon Society, Trailnet, Inc. and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

More info will be in upcoming newsletters, and the Festival program will be released in the spring. For more information on the Festival contact the Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-258-6645 or visit the website at www.wingsofspring.org. Persons or businesses that would like to be part of the Festival should contact Ken Buchholz at 314-368-7639.



St. Louis Audubon Society Proudly Announces 2006 Award Recipients

It is with great pleasure that the Board of Directors presents the following Recipients of the following awards:

Robert J. Terry Lifetime Achievement Award

Leo & Kay Drey: two of the most active conservationists in St. Louis, they have dedicated themselves to countless projects: monitoring of the nuclear power industry, saving Greer Springs from commercial development, fostering of sustainable forestry through Pioneer Forest. To quote an *Audubon* magazine of July '88: "Every state should have a Leo [and Kay] Drey".

Outstanding Natural Resource Legislator

Barbara Fraser, Representative in the Missouri House. Mrs. Fraser scored 100% on the environmental scorecard published by the Sierra Club.

St. Louis Audubon Conservation Award

Pat Jones: Pat, and her late husband Ted, donated \$2.2 million for acquisition and development of the Katy Trail State Park. In recognition of their generosity for Missouri State Parks, the Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones Confluence State Park was named in their honor.

St. Louis Audubon Education Award

Betty Kellerman: A retired and much-admired teacher in the Webster Groves School District, Betty established the Webster Groves Elementary Science Fair. Betty's science classroom was always a science adventure, and she was a tremendous force for encouraging the study of science both with teachers and students.

Outstanding St. Louis Audubon Volunteer

Mitch Leachman: Mitch is always eager to help with Audubon activities, having established the Society's relationship with Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge. Attendance at monthly meetings has been excellent due to Mitch's creativity in procuring numerous area well-known speakers and in his promotion of the programs. Audubon is truly one of the priorities in his life.

St. Louis Audubon Scholarship in Graduate Studies

Awarded this year to two graduate students, one from the University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL) and one from Washington University.

Nicholas Barber: is researching the importance of insectivorous birds to white oak and its associated herbivore community in Missouri.

Brian Allan: researching the importance of avian diversity in reducing the spread of West Nile Virus.

St. Louis Audubon Teacher Scholarships

Recognizes those professional teachers from the St. Louis area who will use the funds from this scholarship to participate in Audubon Ecology Camps and Workshops for educators or similar experiential teacher workshops.

Awarded this year to two area teachers:

Stephanie Villigram, a science teacher at Parkway South High School

Mary Burke, the executive director of Academy of Science- St. Louis

"AMERICA'S BIRDIEST COUNTY" CONTEST -April 21-23

It's time for St Louis' second annual "Birdiest County" Contest! We're calling all birders to help us prove that we are Americas's birdiest county. The Wild Bird Center is again organizing this count of our local birds. The count will be held over the weekend of April 21-23. Each participant will be limited to a 24-hour period of counting. We want to be sure that all of St Louis County is covered, so we're asking participants to commit to specific areas. You can work in teams, and maps delineating count areas will be available April 1 at either Wild Bird Center location. Please come in early to register your team and select your counting area. We're requesting a minimum pledge of \$10 to participate. You can collect pledges from friends, family, and co-workers based on how many birds your team spots. The money collected will be distributed among the several groups-Wild Bird Rehab, ST Louis Audubon, American Bird Conservancy, Cornell Lab's Backyard Feeder Count and World Bird Sanctuary. You may designate which group your collected pledges will go to.

Contact Judy Rowe at the Creve Coeur Wild Bird Center-314-439-9453 or
Denise Kirkpatrick at the South County Wild Bird Center-314-842-1496 for more details.

St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter Only Membership Application

Note: To receive the National Audubon Magazine, contact the National Audubon Society for an additional application.

Your membership dues will go directly to the St. Louis Audubon Society. Your membership dues support local issues that are important to you, programs at our general meetings, and *Tale Feathers*, our newsletter.

Dues are \$15.00 per year and cover all members living at the same address.

Please complete the form, enclose a check payable to SLAS, and mail to:

St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, Mo. 63122.

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Your additional support includes chapter only membership.

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____ Eagle (100.00)

Gift Memberships (\$15.00) are a wonderful way to support St. Louis

Audubon and introduce others to our benefits and activities. Simply fill out the application for the recipient and include the information below. We will send them a gift card for you.

To: _____

From: _____

Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Society 2004 - 2005

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As a joint member with National Audubon, you will receive National Audubon's quarterly magazine (Audubon) as well as St. Louis Audubon Society's Newsletter (Tale Feathers). Now you also have the opportunity to join only the St. Louis Audubon Society, receive Tale Feathers, and participate in the educational and conservation activities of St. Louis Audubon. There is no distinction between individual and family membership. Dues cover all members at the same address. For information, call (314) 822-6595.

Use this form to join St. Louis Audubon / National Audubon

For joint membership in St. Louis Audubon Society and National Audubon Society, Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society** and mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O.Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO. 63122

_____Membership/\$35 For renewal in the National Audubon Society, we recommend that you use the forms supplied by National Audubon. For more information, contact Anne Rankin Horton at 636-256-3402.

_____Introductory Membership / \$20 _____Special Two -Year Introductory Membership / \$30

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